

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SENV, ENRG, CA

SUBJ: DRILLING PERMIT FOR DOME PETROLEUM IN BEAUFORT SEA

REF: OTTAWA 564

1. FOLLOWING EXCHANGE FROM COMMONS QUESTION PERIOD FEBRUARY 12 AFTER NDP MP STUART LEGGATT ASKED WHY, IN VIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, THERE IS SUCH URGENCY ABOUT MAKING A DECISION ON DOME PETROLEUM DRILLING PERMIT:

2. BEGIN QUOTE: HON. JUDD BUCHANAN (MINISTER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT): THE BASIC DECISION IN PRINCIPLE WITH REGARD TO DRILLING IN THE BEAUFORT SEA WAS TAKEN A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, BUT THE PERMITS TO BE ISSUED WERE TO BE SUBJECTED TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESTRICTIONS AND CONDITIONS TO BE IMPOSED AFTER THE TESTS AND THE ROUGHLY \$12 MILLION WORTH OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT. THIS IS A MATTER WHICH I AM CURRENTLY DISCUSSING WITH MY COLLEAGUE, THE MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AS TO JUST WHAT THESE CONDITIONS WOULD BE. A DECISION HAS NOT YET BEEN TAKEN.

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3. MR. LEGGATT: THE MINISTER DID NOT ANSWER THE QUESTION WHY THERE SHOULD BE SUCH URGENCY. IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE PUBLIC IS NOW PAYING FOR THE BERGER INQUIRY WHICH IS LOOKING INTO ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE HIGH ARCTIC, WHY IS IT THAT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE WITH REGARD TO DRILLING OFFSHORE HAVE NOT BEEN EXTENDED CLEARLY TO THE BERGER INQUIRY? AGAIN, WHY CAN THE MINISTER NOT WAIT FOR THE FULL FACTS TO BE DEVELOPED AND REVEALED BEFORE DRILLING PERMITS ARE ISSUED? IN OTHER WORDS, WHY CANNOT THE BERGER COMMISSION TAKE THIS MATTER FULLY UNDER ITS WING AND MAKE A REPORT ON THIS ASPECT AS WELL AS ON PIPELINING IN THE ARCTIC?

4. MR. BUCHANAN; THE FINAL PHRASE DEALT WITH PIPELINING IN THE ARCTIC. MR. JUSTICE BERGER'S MANDATE IS QUITE PRECISE. IT DEALS WITH THE APPLICATION OF CANSO AND SUBSEQUENTLY WE ADDED TO IT THE ASPECT OF THE FOOTHILLS APPLICATION WHERE IT DEVIATED FROM THE CANSO. THAT IS THE LIMIT OF MR. JUSTICE BERGER'S MANDATE. AS FOR THE TIME FACTOR, I DOUBT IT WILL BE DONE BY THE MIDDLE OF FEBRUARY. THIS IS SOMETHING I SHALL HAVE TO PURSUE WITH MY COLLEAGUE, THE MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT. END QUOTE.
ENDERS

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